

CJ7EWK/3 Roadtrip Through Ontario

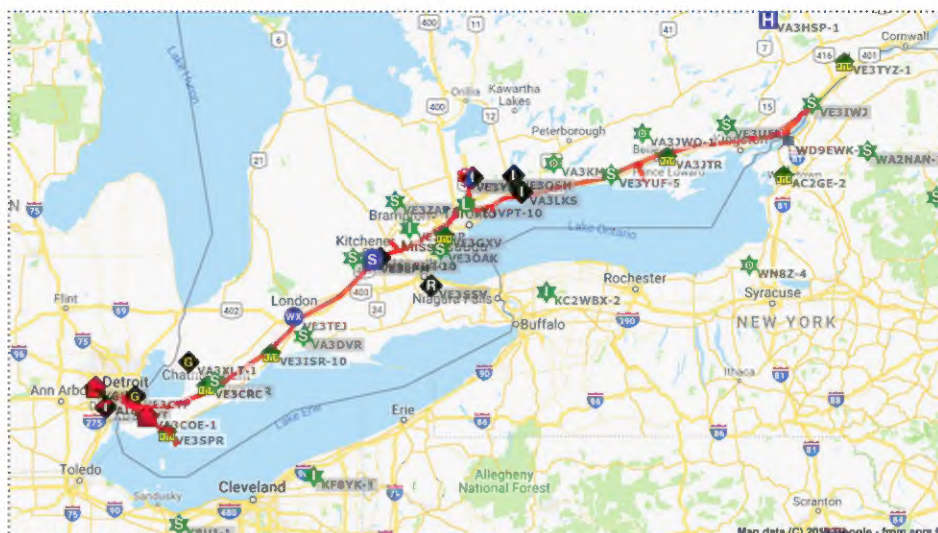
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In recent years when travelling to Dayton, Ohio for Hamvention or for the AMSAT Symposium in 2015, I have made quick trips into southwestern Ontario to work satellites from different locations. In 2019, I wanted to do more than just a day trip, and planned to spend several days going through Ontario before the Hamvention. There was also an opportunity to use a special prefix on my Canadian call sign, so I planned to operate as CJ7EWK/3 from different locations. I also hoped to operate from at least one Canadian national park as part of the year-long Canadian National Parks On The Air (CNPOTA) event

I brought a variety of radios for operating satellites. For working the FM satellites, I had an Icom IC-2730 2m/70cm FM mobile radio, along with a Kenwood TH-D72 HT as a backup radio. For the SSB satellites, I had a pair of Yaesu FT-817NDs – one for transmitting to the satellites and the other to receive the downlink signals. I also had a Kenwood TH-D74 with me, which was used for the Automatic Packet Reporting System (APRS) to show my travels during this trip. The TH-D74 could also be a backup radio for satellite operating. For all of my satellite operating, I used an Elk Antennas handheld 2m/70cm log periodic antenna.

I flew to Detroit on Saturday, May 11, where I rented a car and drove over the Ambassador Bridge to enter Windsor. After checking into a motel, I decided to get started working satellites that evening. To get away from power lines that were noisy on previous trips, I worked a couple of passes on the SO-50 satellite from a carpool parking lot along Highway 401 east of Windsor in grid EN82. Sixteen QSOs went in the log, with stations in Canada, across the continental United States and Panama. This was a good start!

For my first full day in Canada on this trip, Sunday, May 12, I went down to Point Pelee National Park. This park is the southernmost point on the Canadian mainland and is in grid EN81. Even though grid EN81 covers parts of Michigan and Ohio as well as Ontario, it isn't regularly heard on the satellites. I also wanted to spend the day on the air from the park and hoped to make enough contacts to count this as an activation for CNPOTA (#ON03).



Point Pelee National Park was busy this day, with many visitors watching birds. I found a parking lot at Northwest Beach, along the west side of the peninsula, which was a good spot for working satellites. The first satellite pass I attempted was on SO-50 just before 8 am (1200 UTC). A little early for many satellite operators, I logged only 5 QSOs with stations in the eastern United States and Mexico. After this early pass, I had a couple of hours before the next satellite pass so I drove north to Leamington for a quick breakfast and then returned to Point Pelee to work many more satellite passes.

After breakfast, the CAS-4A satellite went by. Six QSOs in the log with stations in Canada and the US, followed by three consecutive passes on the most popular satellite currently in operation – AO-91. These three passes covered all of North America and did not disappoint. The first pass covered the Eastern United States and I logged five stations. The second pass went through the middle of the continent and 10 stations from Panama to Toronto were logged. The third pass, just before 3 pm (1900 UTC), was the most

productive of the day – 19 contacts with stations in Mexico and the continental US.

After the three AO-91 passes, I worked other passes on satellites in SSB – AO-7, FO-29 and CAS-4B – over the next three hours to wrap up the day. Stations in Canada, the continental US and Alaska went in the log. I was visited by a Park Warden during this time, who was curious about my “bird watching”. The Warden checked to confirm there were no rules against using Amateur Radio from a Canadian national park and I showed him the CNPOTA website on my mobile phone. I assured the Warden I was not installing anything in the park, and not using electricity from the park. The Warden appreciated my explanation and making him aware of the CNPOTA activity.

As I was packing up, rain started to fall. Perfect timing! I quickly stowed my gear in the car and drove back to Windsor in the rain for dinner and sleep. A total of 60 contacts were logged from Point Pelee and this became an official CNPOTA activation.



Monday, May 13, was mostly a travel day. I made a quick detour to Guelph to have lunch with Pierre Fogal, VE3KTB, one of the operators at the Eureka Amateur Radio Club VY0ERC (<https://www.qrz.com/db/VY0ERC>) who has worked satellites from the Far North since 2018. After visiting Pierre, I went on to Toronto and found a motel for the night north



of Toronto in Newmarket. I wanted to be near the FN03/FN04 grid boundary (44 degrees North) to work some passes. Grid FN03 covers much of Toronto and is commonly heard on satellite passes. FN04 isn't heard as often. This would be my first time operating from either FN03 or FN04.

After checking into the motel and getting some dinner, I found a parking lot at a GO Transit train station in Aurora that sits on the FN03/FN04 grid boundary. It took a couple of minutes to find a good parking space where I would be on the line to work satellites, but I found one on the west side of the railroad tracks at the station. Before calling it a day, I worked two passes on the SO-50 satellite and one on the AO-92 satellite to see if this location would work for more activity during the next day. This location was fine and I logged 20 contacts with stations in Canada, the continental US and Panama in the evening.

On Tuesday, May 14, I started exchanging tweets with Peter, 2M0SQL, in northern Scotland. We wanted to see if we could work each other through either AO-91 or AO-92. For this effort, I parked at the Upper Canada Mall in Newmarket across the street from my motel. One of the mall's parking lots was on high ground and had a good view to the northeast – perfect for working satellites in that direction.

After unsuccessfully trying to make a contact on AO-92, we saw an AO-91 pass just before 10 am that covered northern Scotland and the Toronto area. It was a low pass for both of us – the satellite was only 5 degrees above the horizon for me, and half that for Peter. After I worked VE9BEL in New Brunswick, I started hearing 2M0SQL through the satellite. CJ7EWK/3 and 2M0SQL made a quick contact, the first time I have worked Europe from North America on a satellite in FM.

After working 2M0SQL on AO-92, I drove back to the GO Transit station in Aurora. I wanted to spend more time putting both grids FN03 and FN04 on the air, and worked 4 passes through the middle of the day from the train station – two each on AO-91 and AO-92. These were productive passes, leading to 46 contacts in the log with stations from Vancouver to New Brunswick in Canada, from coast to coast in the continental

US, and with Costa Rica and Panama in Central America.

For the late afternoon, I drove to Scarborough for another eyeball QSO and I met Adrian, VA3NNA, who has been working satellites for the past couple of years. We met at his house and then drove to a nearby park along Lake Ontario as Adrian wanted to see how I worked satellites with my portable equipment and I was happy to oblige. I worked two passes of the CAS-4B satellite, and an FO-29 pass in between, for six contacts from the lakefront. Then Adrian and I had some dinner before I left Toronto.

I went east on the 401, leaving Toronto, and driving for a couple of hours until I reached Trenton. I found a room for the night in Trenton around 10 pm, and saw I could work the SO-50 and AO-92 satellites an hour later. From outside the motel, located in grid FN14, I worked 10 stations on the SO-50 pass at 11 pm, followed by making nine more contacts on the AO-92 pass that went by a half-hour later. After logging the day's contacts and uploading to Logbook of the World (LoTW), I went to sleep.

Wednesday, May 15, would be my last full day in Canada. I planned to spend most of the day working satellites and saw that the boundary between grids FN13 and FN14 (44 degrees North) was a short drive south of Trenton. I found a spot along the Loyalist Parkway on the edge of the town of Coneseon that straddled the grid boundary and parked there. For the first time in this trip, I had blue skies for much of the day.

I started on the AO-92 satellite at 11 am and worked 12 stations in the eastern USA and Canada. Once AO-92 went below the horizon, I quickly switched to AO-91 for 4 QSOs with stations in Ontario, Newfoundland and Massachusetts late in that pass. I had an hour before the next

pass, again on AO-92, which covered the central and western parts of North America. I logged 12 contacts in the span of 9 minutes. Once again, AO-91 was coming by as AO-92 went away. Five more QSOs in the log. I had a break before another AO-91 pass after 2:15 pm, which covered much of Canada and the continental US, along with Mexico. I worked 15 stations on this busy pass – one station in northern Mexico, another station near Vancouver, and stations from California to Alabama across the continental US.

After the AO-91 and AO-92 passes, I worked a number of passes in SSB on several different satellites: AO-7, CAS-4A, CAS-4B, FO-29, XW-2B and XW-2F. I logged 21 contacts on these passes, mostly with stations in the continental US, but also some with stations in Canada, Puerto Rico, and a surprise from across the Atlantic. Early in an FO-29 pass around 4:30 pm, Peter, G0ABI, in England was calling me. We made the contact and that made my day. I kept working passes until 6:30 pm, before packing up and leaving the Trenton area. I drove east on the 401 through Kingston and found a motel room in Gananoque, near the Thousand Islands Bridge. But this wasn't the end of my operating from Ontario...

After checking into the motel room in Gananoque, I saw I had some satellite passes in the late evening. Since I had been operating from grids FN13 and FN14 much of the day, I saw that I could drive a little further east on the 401 and reach grid FN24. Grid FN24 straddles the Canada/US border and normally doesn't have much satellite activity from either side of the border. I drove to an ONroute Service Centre on the eastbound side of the 401 at Mallorytown, a few kilometres inside grid FN24, so I could take advantage of the large parking lot for a good view of the sky.

From that parking lot, I was ready for the first SO-50 pass around 9:45 pm. No Canadian stations were heard on this pass, but I worked 12 stations from the central and eastern US. There was an hour to update my log before an AO-92 pass came by just after 11 pm. This was another productive pass, with 12 more contacts in the log. Only one of the AO-92 contacts was with another Canadian station – Adrian, VA3NNA, showed up from Toronto, with the other 11 coming from as far away as Louisiana and Wyoming. I also worked a nearby station – Robert, KE2QI, lives across the St. Lawrence River in upstate New York. Robert had never worked anyone else in his grid FN24 until I visited the grid this

evening. I was more than happy to work him, and then confirm the contact, so he could say he had worked someone else in his home grid via satellite.

The last satellite pass I worked on this trip was on SO-50, minutes after AO-92 went away. Only six contacts were logged, almost all of them along the US west coast (California, Oregon, Washington), along with Utah and South Dakota. After SO-50 went away, I drove back to the motel in Gananoque, updated my logbook and Logbook of the World, and went to sleep.

On the morning of Thursday, May 16, I crossed back into the United States over the Thousand Island Bridge around 8 am. I made a lunch stop in Syracuse, New York for an eyeball QSO with another satellite operator – Don, KB2YSI – over lunch. Don and I worked an AO-92 pass, and we worked stations up and down the US east coast, along with VE9CB in New Brunswick. After lunch, I continued my long drive to Dayton with stops in Buffalo (grid FN02) for an AO-91 pass, along with another stop in Erie, Pennsylvania (grid EN92) for a CAS-4B pass, arriving in Dayton around 11 pm. The Hamvention was fun and I continued working satellites from locations near Cincinnati during the Hamvention weekend, along with other locations in Indiana and Michigan after the Hamvention, before flying home on May 20.

For the entire 10-day trip, I drove over 3,400 kilometres. A little more than a third of that was in Ontario, where I operated from seven different grid locators (EN81, EN82, FN03, FN04, FN13, FN14 and FN24) in just over five days. I worked passes in FM on three different satellites (AO-91, AO-92, SO-50) and in SSB on seven satellites (AO-7, CAS-4A, CAS-4B, FO-29, XW-2A, XW-2B and XW-2F). I logged 268 QSOs as CJ7EWK/3, and over 80% of those QSOs have been confirmed so far in Logbook of the World. This was my longest trip through any part of Canada in many years and it was fun to get on the air from so many different locations.

Patrick Stoddard was originally licensed as WD9EWK in 1977. He now holds an Amateur Extra licence in the USA. In 2002, Patrick obtained a Canadian certificate as VA7EWK, and holds all three qualifications. Among other facets of Amateur Radio, he has worked satellites from over 100 grid locators in locations in Ontario and British Columbia in Canada; along with locations across the continental US as well as Mexico and Australia over the past decade with portable and QRP equipment. He is a member of Radio Amateurs of Canada (among other radio clubs and organizations), and a life member of ARRL and AMSAT. Patrick has achieved WAS and VUCC via satellite; along with WAS, WAC, and DXCC on the HF bands. Patrick has been an IT professional for over two decades, living in the Phoenix, Arizona area.

